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Check List of the Fishes of Japan. — In the series called *Annotationes Zoologicæ Japonenses* (Vol. III), published by the Zoölogical Society of Tokyo under the auspices of the Imperial University of Tokyo, Jordan and Snyder give a "Preliminary Check List of the Fishes of Japan." This catalogue is a neatly printed memoir of 159 pages.

It includes 686 species, exclusive of species from the Kuriles and Riu Kiu, mentioned in footnotes. The known localities in Japan are enumerated for each species, and the Japanese vernacular name of each is given. These vernacular names, corrected and largely compiled by Dr. C. Ishikawa, give the paper a special value to Japanese students.

The paper was in press before the authors planned their expedition to Japan in 1900. In this expedition upwards of 250 species were added to the list and a number of changes and corrections will be rendered necessary. The total number of species of fishes now known from the entire empire is between 1000 and 1100.

We may note that the new genus *Corusculus* (*berycoides*) is identical with the earlier Eteliscus, having the same type. The appearance in the text of this needless name was the result of accident.

The paper is "dedicated to Professor Kakichi Mitsukuri of the University of Tokyo in recognition of his work as a naturalist and of his character as a man." It is to be hoped that this paper, written in America and published in Japan, may help serve the purpose of bringing Japanese science and that of the nations called Occidental into closer touch with each other.

D. S. J.

Notes. — The spouting of the finback whale has been successfully observed by Henking (*Zool. Anzeiger*, Bd. XXIV, pp. 103–111, 1901) while off the Norwegian coast. The spout is not in any sense a jet of water, but is a cloud of water particles, as maintained first by Scoresby, and is driven out of the animal's nostrils by an operation not unlike a sneeze. The cloud usually has the outline of a reversed comma and Professor Henking's paper is noteworthy as containing the first accurate drawings of this outline.

The difficulty of ascertaining the exact limits of the ectoderm and the entoderm in the mouth cavity of vertebrates has been the chief obstacle in determining from which germ layer the hypophysis is derived. Zeleny (*Biological Bulletin*, Vol. II, pp. 267–281) has found that in turtles this organ is formed before the mouth breaks through and that it is derived from the ectoderm.

In a synopsis of the rice rats (Oryzomys) of the United States and Mexico, Merriam (*Proceedings of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, Vol. III, pp. 273–295) adds twenty-two new species and subspecies to the thirteen already known.

Phoronis pacifica, a new species described by H. B. Torrey (*Biological Bulletin*, Vol. II, pp. 283–288), is interesting as the first of this almost cosmopolitan genus to be taken on our west coast.

BOTANY.

Plant Life of Alabama.[1] — For nearly forty years the late Dr. Mohr gave close attention to the flora of his adopted home, Alabama; and the later years of his life were devoted to the preparation of a book embodying the results of his long study. He lived to see the last proof sheets corrected, but the date of its publication is a fortnight later than that of his death. A historical account of the botanical work done in Alabama, a detailed study of its physiography, geology, and meteorology, and a discussion of the general principles of plant distribution, lead to an analysis of the features marking the Alabama flora, which, more than any other North American work, exemplifies the trend of modern ecological study in a varied region; and the book closes with an annotated systematic catalogue of the spontaneous plants, including descriptions of new or critical species, a discussion of the relations of the flora to agriculture, and a list of plants known to be cultivated in the state. Considering Dr. Mohr's advanced age, it is remarkable that he should have adapted himself to the current trend of American botanists in regard to nomenclature, but in this, as in his grasp of the newer field problems in botany, he shows a plasticity far out of the ordinary run, and his work, which is of lasting value, is likely to produce nowhere the impression that a younger man, if possessed of his knowledge, could have done it better.

W. T.

Notes. — The varied and far-reaching character of the botanical work being done under the geological and natural history survey of Minnesota is shown by part 5 of the current series of *Minnesota*

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[1] Mohr, Charles. Plant Life of Alabama, *Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb.*, vol. vi. 921 pp., with several plates. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1901.